

**TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING – MONDAY EVENING
APRIL 22, 2013**

PRESENT: Parella, Herreshoff, Calouro, Stuart, and Sweeney

ALSO PRESENT: Antonio A. Teixeira, Town Administrator
Julie Goucher, Town Treasurer

The Council met in special session on Monday evening, April 22, 2013 in the Town Hall, Council Chambers, beginning at 7:02 o'clock PM, Council Chairman Parella presiding:

Prior to the commencement of this evening's agenda, Council Chairman Parella called for a moment of silence in honor of the victims of the Boston Marathon bombing incident.

1. **PUBLIC HEARING** on Provisional Budget 2013-2014

Council Chairman Parella opened the public hearing and explained that the purpose of the hearing was to provide the public with the opportunity to be heard on the Provisional Budget as advertised. She noted that the Municipal Budget Provisional figure (Schedules A & B) totaled \$43,030,388 and the school portion of that budget was \$22,039,592. It was also noted that the Enterprise Fund – Water Pollution Control/Composting (Schedule C) totaled \$4,885,811.

Angelo Conti, of 46 Franklin Street, explained that he has lived in Bristol for fifty (50) years.

Mr. Conti questioned the need for the Town to pay \$70,000 for parking lot leases and suggested that this payment provides little for the taxpayers. He also questioned the proposed expenditure of \$30,000 for "advertising" (Explore Bristol).

Mr. Conti suggested that the Town should cut back on its proposed expenditures to bring down the tax rate. Mr. Conti also suggested that the downtown businesses may not be contributing an equitable tax amount since the business owners and their employees seem to occupy the Town's rented parking lots.

Mr. Conti explained that he lives on a fixed income and has to make ends meet with difficulty. He added that the cities of Newport and Providence obtain revenues through parking payments from customers.

**TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING – MONDAY EVENING
APRIL 22, 2013**

Mr. Conti asked to know what comprised "IT & Support" with Council Chairman Parella explaining that this budget line pays for computers, software, and the technical assistance necessary to have these work. She further explained that the support is also necessary for the Town's financial operations.

Mr. Conti asked to know what happens to the funds derived from of Town dockage with Council Chairman Parella noting that these funds are added to the General Fund and that the funds offset the tax rate.

Council Chairman Parella added that the funds collected by the various departments are not generally kept by those departments.

Mr. Conti asked to know the purpose for "Fire Department Lease" with Town Treasurer Goucher responding that this is the payment amount for a leased vehicle.

Mr. Conti stated that the description was difficult to decipher with Council Chairman Parella noting that the detailed information is found in the budget book made available at Town Hall. She also suggested that the Town should endeavor to have more detailed budget line descriptions whenever possible.

Mr. Conti raised the issue of "Explore Bristol" with Council Chairman Parella noting that this is a "partnership" between local area businesses and the Town. She also noted that the Town derives a portion of the bed and meal taxes that are collected by these establishments. Town Treasurer Goucher explained that this amount is approximately \$390,000. Council Chairman Parella explained that the Town's investment of \$100,000 for parking lots and toward the efforts of Explore Bristol seems to provide a suitable rate of return.

Mr. Conti also suggested that the Town's reserves should be used only in emergencies.

Armand Bilotti, of 2 Stephen Drive, expressed concern that the Town was exceeding the State-imposed cap and that he did not think it advisable to exceed this cap.

**TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING – MONDAY EVENING
APRIL 22, 2013**

Council Chairman Parella noted that the change in the school enrollment ratio and the pension contributions have been primary budget drivers this year.

Town Treasurer Goucher explained that the Town has changed its collection rate and will therefore not exceed the spending cap.

Mr. Bilotti stated that he understands the enrollment issue and also the pension contribution increase. He added that he believes that the budget "deserves and warrants an additional look" and that reductions may be possible "in little pieces."

He added that he believes that the budget is "exceeding what it justifiable in certain areas."

Council Chairman Parella stated that the current and prior Town Administrators prepared the budget in great detail, looking at expense history to make recommendations for the provisional budgets. She added that the Council also examines the budget in detail. Council Chairman Parella added that the additional \$600,000 needed to cover the enrollment shift is a "huge number right in front of us" and that the change from the local pension plan to "critical status" put the Town \$1 million "in the hole." She added that the reductions in State aid have also made a considerable impact upon the budget.

Council Chairman Parella stated that she believes that the Council has accomplished what it could while honoring the commitment to maintain Town services. She added that she welcomes ideas from the public.

Mr. Bilotti agreed that the pension costs and the school enrollment shift are "paramount." He added that the School District appears to have done a reasonable job at preparing its budget. He added that the pension and the school shift is the reason to have a "rainy day fund."

Peter Hewett, of 11 Wendy Drive, asked to know the amount of the reserve account during the past five (5) years with Town Treasurer Goucher noting that the recommended amount of the reserve account is between 8% and 15%. She explained that the reserve account has fluctuated from 24% and 12% and that she generally recommends a reserve account at 15%.

**TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING – MONDAY EVENING
APRIL 22, 2013**

Mr. Hewett asked to know what reserve funds have been used for in the past with Town Treasurer Goucher responding that these have been used to offset the tax rate.

Mr. Hewett asked to know if the Town plans to use surplus for the Animal Shelter with Town Treasurer Goucher responding that that the Town Council guaranteed covering the expenditure to build the shelter if the cost exceeds \$2 million and if the excess is not achieved via fundraising.

A discussion ensued regarding the Animal Shelter project with Mr. Hewett requesting that none of the surplus should be used as a loan or guarantee for the Animal Shelter.

Councilman Herreshoff explained that the Council stipulated that the Shelter should be built without exceeding the \$2 million available and that he opposed the idea to allow the project to exceed that amount with a Town guarantee.

Town Treasurer Goucher noted that the project has been "value engineered" and that she is not certain of the result of the value engineering at this time. She added that the fundraising effort appears to be going well.

Council Chairman Parella noted that the Animal Shelter is not the subject of this public hearing and that it is not included in the Provisional Budget.

Mr. Hewett noted that an amount near \$300,000 was guaranteed at a meeting last year.

Council Chairman Parella stated that she did not recall the specifics of the circumstances of that particular meeting and asked the Clerk to provide her with a copy of the minutes.

Town Treasurer Goucher noted that the Animal Shelter capital expenses are not included in the Provisional Budget being discussed this evening.

Councilman Calouro stated that he agreed that the Town should try to stay within the \$2 million.

Council Chairman Parella restated that there is no appropriation in this year's Provisional Budget for the Animal Shelter.

**TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING - MONDAY EVENING
APRIL 22, 2013**

Calouro/Sweeney - Voted
unanimously to close the public
hearing.

***AMEND ITEM**

2. Executive Session pursuant to RIGL § 42-46-5
(a)(1) Personnel re Harbormaster Search Committee
Interviews

Herreshoff/Stuart - Voted
unanimously to move into Executive
Session pursuant to RIGL § 42-46-5
(a)(1) at 7:33 o'clock PM.

*It is noted for the record that the Council was in recess
for approximately 30 minutes before beginning the Executive
Session.*

Stuart/Sweeney - Voted to resume
open session and seal the minutes
of the Executive Session at 9:12
o'clock PM.

There being no further business, upon a motion by
Councilman Stuart, seconded by Councilman Sweeney and voted
unanimously, the Chairman declared this meeting to be
adjourned at 9:13 o'clock PM.

Louis P. Cirillo, CMC
Council Clerk